

# How to Move Heaven With Your Prayers

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Around the turn of the millennium an intriguing megatrend swept across the body of Christ. Believers all around the globe became enthralled with an obscure, 32-word prayer found in one verse of Scripture: "And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, 'Oh, that You would indeed bless me and enlarge my territory, that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that it may not bring me hardship!'" (1 Chron. 4:10).

I believe this brief petition resonated with millions of prayerful people primarily because of the verse's concluding comment: *"So God granted him what he asked"* (1 Chron. 4:10, emphasis added).

Wow! How simple can you get? As far as we know, Jabez didn't attend any all-night prayer vigils. No one laid hands on him for an impartation. He didn't fast 40 days. He didn't prostrate himself before the Lord for hours. He didn't mechanically repeat a certain faith confession hundreds of times. These aren't bad things to do, but they are not what Jabez did. He just made five short requests combined into one sentence that took maybe 10 seconds to utter. And God was so deeply moved that He actually did it—*He granted him what he requested*. Don't you feel like echoing my sentiment? *Wow!*

I have to admit, I got swept away with the profound potency of this prayer as well, but I can remember thinking numerous times: *"If Jabez's prayer could strike such awe in the hearts of believers, surely there are other prayers in the Bible that should also command our attention, prayers that are just as weighty (if not more so) and just as effective in securing a response from heaven."*

So I embarked on a journey through God's Word, seeking not just instances in the Bible when people prayed, but specifically times when petitions also attracted some kind of supernatural response. I thought if certain prayer principles worked for celebrated faith heroes in the past, then using a similar approach should potentially bring results for believers who seek God in this era.

## Prayer Heroes

I discovered a number of great examples—very inspiring prayers from key Bible figures such as Moses, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Elijah, Jonah and the members of the fledgling church in Jerusalem. Some are lengthy; some are quite short and to the point. But all were effective in bringing the kingdom of heaven down to earth.

Some of these prayers have impacted me far more than the prayer of Jabez ever did—and studying them has awakened a renewed confidence that God will do it again. I pray the same thing happens for you.

Martin Luther is quoted as saying, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness." Let me assure you, we aren't trying to "force" God's hand by using any time-proven methods. Instead, we're merely aligning ourselves with God's will and getting in a receptive position.

So let's accept this challenge together! Let's determine to achieve the full capacity of a consecrated prayer life, expecting "great and mighty things" (Jer. 33:3).

### **Moving God Like Moses**

One of these divinely moving prayers that has fascinated me is from Moses. After obeying God's call to lead the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, Moses is summoned by the Lord to Mount Sinai, where he receives the Ten Commandments. The Israelites, taking advantage of his absence, lapsed into idolatry, convincing Aaron to make them a golden calf to be their god.

As we see in Exodus 32, Moses' first reaction was to throw down and break the tablets of stone, burn the idol, grind it to powder, mix it with water and make the children of Israel drink of the concoction. After this he displayed great unselfishness. When God set His mind toward destroying the entire nation and raising up a new nation from Moses' seed, Moses pled with God to instead remember His commitment to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God mercifully relented.

Yet in Exodus 33 we find the Most High still deliberating over what He is going to do to the Israelites. At the same time, Moses, completely frustrated with the people, turns his heart worshipfully toward God.

Let's look at the passage in verses 12-18: "Moses said to the Lord, 'See, You say to me, "Bring up this people," but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight." Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You, and that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too that this nation is Your people.'

"And He said, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'

"Then he said to Him, 'If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how will it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we will be distinguished, I and Your people, from all the people who are on the face of the earth?'

"The Lord said to Moses, 'I will do this thing of which you have spoken, for you have found favor in My sight, and I know you by name.'

"Then Moses said, 'I pray, show me Your glory.'"

This last petition that Moses uttered was only six words long ("*I pray, show me Your glory*") but it elicited from God an extraordinary series of promises. Audibly He pledged: "'I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.' But He said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.'

And the Lord said, 'Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen'" (Ex. 33:19-23).

God responded to Moses by giving him the very thing he asked. God showed him His glory. How amazing! And what He has done for one, He can do for another.

#### 4 'Power Points' in Moses' Prayer

We can learn several things from Moses' prayer. Let's break down his full conversation with God into four "power points" to see how and why he obtained such a visitation from the Most High. At the conclusion of each point, I've included an action step for application to your own life.

##### Power Point #1

Moses first asked God to "show me now Your way," the God-inspired path that he should follow (Ex. 33:13). He wanted to be in the center of God's will.

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